

DEC 1951 51-48

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT

COUNTRY USSR

SUBJECT Port and Harbor Facilities at Omega

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1	2
CD NO.	
OO/C NO.	
ORR NO.	
DAS NO.	
OCI NO.	

DATE DISTR. 31 Aug 1953

NO. OF PAGES 2

NO. OF ENCLS.

SUPP. TO
REPORT NO.

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1. Omega is a lumber exporting port. The port is equipped with a plank wharf extending sixty feet from shore. Extending inland about one-half mile is a level area used for storage of lumber. There were no cranes on the wharf; all ships using their own running gear for loading. Six to eight "lumber-handling" machines, similar to "Ross Carriers" were observed in the port area. The port did not appear to handle any imports.

2. Port Facilities

Omega is located at the mouth of the Omega River on the Onazhskaya Guba of the White Sea at Lat 63° 54' N, Long 38° 10' E. The City of Omega is located approximately two miles up the Omega River from the port area. Only one road leads from the port area, probably to Omega proper. The ground in the port area is sandy, and plank roads, about 18' in width and 4" in depth, are used throughout the wharf area. One set of railroad tracks, believed to be narrow-gauge, was observed. No rail traffic was noted but the track is believed to lead to a sawmill in the interior. A single-plank wharf serves the port. This wharf is about 60' wide and 1000' long and can accommodate three ships of four or five thousand tons.

3. Harbor Entrance and Approaches

Source advised that it is very risky to enter Omega Bay without a pilot, because of numerous sand banks. The port can be entered only at high tide because of a sand bar which lies athwart the channel. The entrance to the bay is about four miles across, but narrows at the mouth of the Omega River to one-half mile. The Omega River channel is rather straight, with no unusual bends. The channel would not admit a ship of more than five thousand tons. There was no evidence of dredging operations. The Omega River is frozen from November through May. In May there are 22 hours of daylight and two hours of twilight.

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4. Port Administration

Fifteen Soviets came aboard at Omega. Ten were in Soviet Army uniforms and wore pistols. The Soviets inspected all books and magazines, especially those written in English. The inspection party seemed to be looking for propaganda literature. It appeared that they could read little English. Four or five men spoke a few words of English.

5. The name of the shore agency which supplied the stevedores and dock laborers was INFLOT. Source was driven to INFLOT headquarters (about ten minutes drive from the wharf) to sign various papers before departure. There appeared to be an ample labor supply. Each ship is furnished with three crews of dock laborers composed of ten men each. These crews work 12 hour shifts. Two Soviet guards were stationed at the gangway of every ship. These uniformed guards wore pistols and stood four-hour watches. Each stevedore was required to show identification each time he passed to and from the ship. Every member of the crew was required to have a pass, issued by the Soviets, in order to go ashore. None of the crew visited Omega proper, but a few, however, did visit a dancing place close to the wharf. The dance hall was showing a Soviet propaganda motion picture and provided some other free entertainment.

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